

Walkable Development

As noted in Chapter 2, “A New Era of Opportunity,” walkability is a special asset Downtown should emphasize. An environment where it is convenient, safe and fun to walk among a variety of different activities offers unique benefits to economic activity and quality of life that environments dependent on automobiles can’t match. While Downtown clearly has areas that do not today feel very walkable, it also has excellent fundamental infrastructure for walking: an extensive grid of streets and blocks with sidewalks throughout, street trees along most streets, destinations with a variety of uses, including living, working, shopping and recreation, and concentrations of uses that are sufficient to support transit service.

The critical role of walkability in attracting high-value development is evident in Wichita. Old Town, the Downtown district that has attracted the most development investment over the past 20 years, has succeeded in large part due to its walkability. The market analysis conclusions in Chapter 2 reveal that development opportunity, whether for housing, office, retail or hotel, increases to the extent that Downtown is walkable. For instance, the office market analysis concluded that improved walkability could double Downtown’s capture of new office space, moving demand to the high end of the 220,000-480,000sf range predicted.

It is also important to note that the types of development attracted to walkable areas tend to further reinforce walkability. The type of creative worker attracted to a

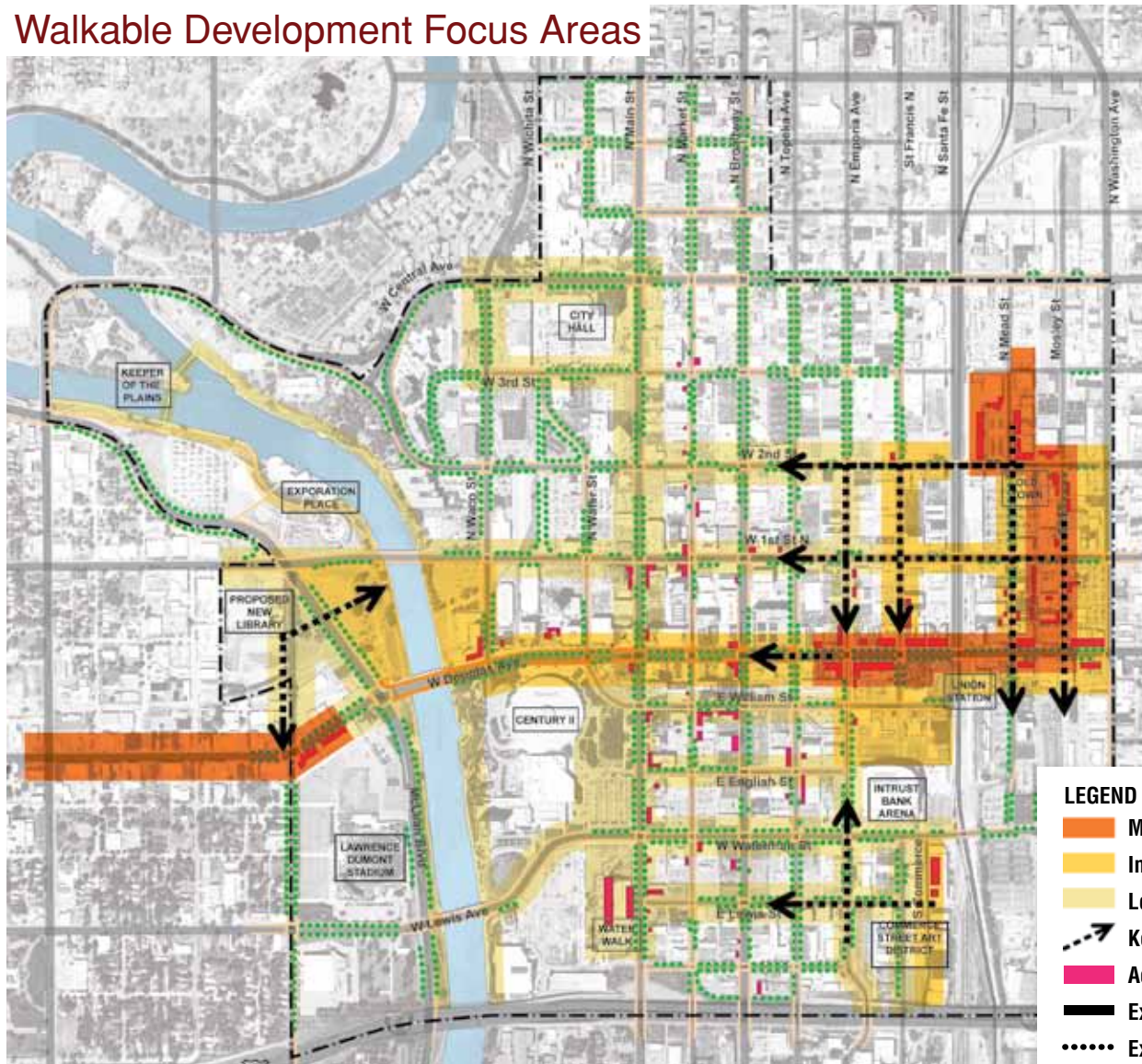
Downtown office space, or resident attracted to a Downtown loft, tends to want to walk and take advantage of convenient walking access to cafes, parks and other amenities. For every additional person walking, other people are more inclined to join them. Similarly, the type of retailer most interested in a Downtown location tends to provide an interesting, accessible storefront that welcomes pedestrians and promotes safety by placing more “eyes on the street.”

Therefore, a central recommendation of this plan is that new development and redevelopment be focused in ways that best take advantage of existing walkability and help extend it to more areas of Downtown. This should be done through a complementary framework of walkable development focus areas, transit corridors, and focus areas for specific land uses.

Transit Corridors

Transit and walkability reinforce one another. In a downtown setting, transit can “extend the walk,” helping a person reach a larger set of destinations without needing a car. In some cases people will be more willing to walk to a destination if they can depend on a convenient return ride by transit due to onset of poor weather, nightfall or other reasons. Transit—especially transit that has a sense of permanence, such as suggested by high-quality bus shelters—reinforces market interest in Downtown development because it increases access to amenities and housing, and it reduces the development costs associated with providing parking. Hotel development is especially attracted to transit, as many guests may lack a car

Walkable Development Focus Areas



Maximizing downtown's demonstrated potential to attract development and provide amenities depends on maximizing walkability. The priority walking corridors identified in the diagram at left are those in which new private investment in development and public investment in transit, parks, and other infrastructure can best work together to maximize their benefit to regional economic growth and quality of life. While development should be welcomed throughout downtown, public incentives applied to attract private development, as well as public investment in public facilities, should be directed to the Walkable Development Focus Areas. These are indicated as street corridors in the diagram but apply to property that has significant street frontage in a focus-area corridor. Generally, encouraging development in the yellow "immediate priority" corridors should receive the highest priority. Secondary priority should be given to encouraging development in the orange "most walkable today" and light yellow "longer-term priority" corridors. For retail and any other uses that perform best in locations with nearly

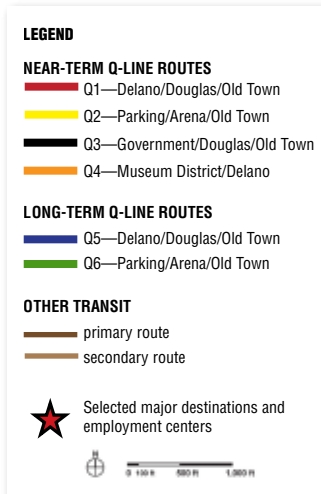
continuous walkability, the arrows indicate where these can build in linear fashion upon existing (or planned) concentrations.

or wish to avoid renting one. Walkability is likewise critical to the success of transit, as transit is only attractive to the extent there is an inviting walk between a transit stop and a destination.

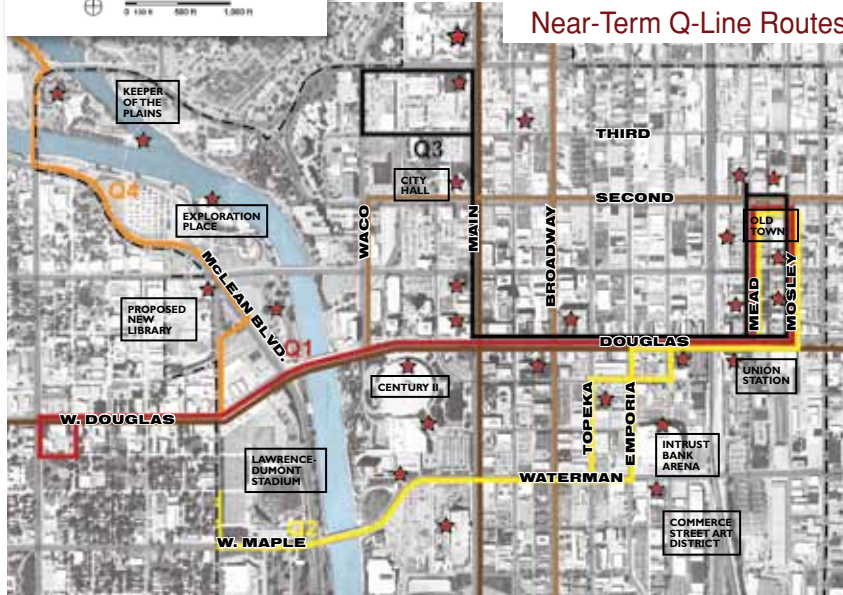
Downtown holds strong potential to support more robust transit service than it has today. The substantial increase in Q-Line ridership experienced since opening of the INTRUST Bank Arena demonstrates that convenient transit can attract many new riders who will voluntarily choose it over driving. Additional convenient transit service can in return reduce development costs and expand development opportunity by reducing the amount of funding and Downtown land devoted to parking. Further efficiency and convenience is possible by locating shared public parking facilities on transit routes. The plan recommends strategic public parking locations (see the

“Framework: Transportation” section, below) that reinforce the recommended transit corridors.

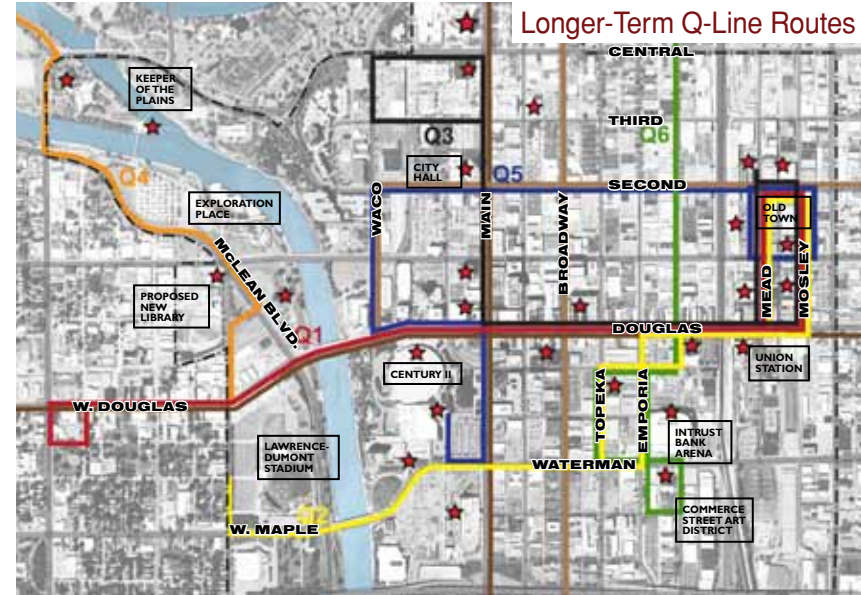
Because transit, walkability, and walkable development so complement one another, expanded Downtown transit circulator services should be provided in corridors that reinforce walkable development focus areas. Like today’s Q-line, new services should have distinctive, inviting vehicles that specifically serve Downtown, including major destinations, parking concentrations, and the Downtown Transit Center. The near-term Q-line transit map shows four new priority Q-line routes. All routes would feature more frequent service (with buses arriving at least every 10 to 15 minutes) and longer operating hours than the service currently provides. Routes Q1 and Q2 replicate the existing Q-line route but improve upon it with service that is more



Near-Term Q-Line Routes



Longer-Term Q-Line Routes



frequent, dual-direction, and more continuous along Douglas (the current Q-line typically operates with a one-way loop). Routes Q3 and Q4 provide access to important destinations in the Government Center and Museum districts. The longer-term map adds two more routes, with Q5 emphasizing performing arts, hotel, dining and convention destinations, and Q6 adding the Commerce Street Arts District and Via Christi Hospital. Together, the routes emphasize Douglas as Downtown's primary transit corridor (with city/regional routes overlapping multiple Q-line routes) as well as Old Town as a key destination.

See the "Framework: Transportation" section below for more detailed information on recommended transit improvements.

Focus Areas for Key Land Uses

The presence of a complementary mix of land uses is one of Downtown's core strengths. While an overall mix of uses is desirable throughout Downtown, different land uses may be more or less appropriate in different portions of Downtown due to market-driven location criteria, tolerance of being isolated from other uses, accessibility and other factors. The plan recommends encouraging new market-based housing, office, retail and hotel uses, as well as institutions like museums and other civic buildings, in certain areas according to the following diagrams.

Housing—Housing is appropriate throughout Downtown for several reasons. It adds needed evening and weekend activity to office districts and other areas with a predominant

use or schedule. Designed and marketed well, it can tolerate being in pioneer locations, as demonstrated by some recent developments. It also represents about two-thirds of

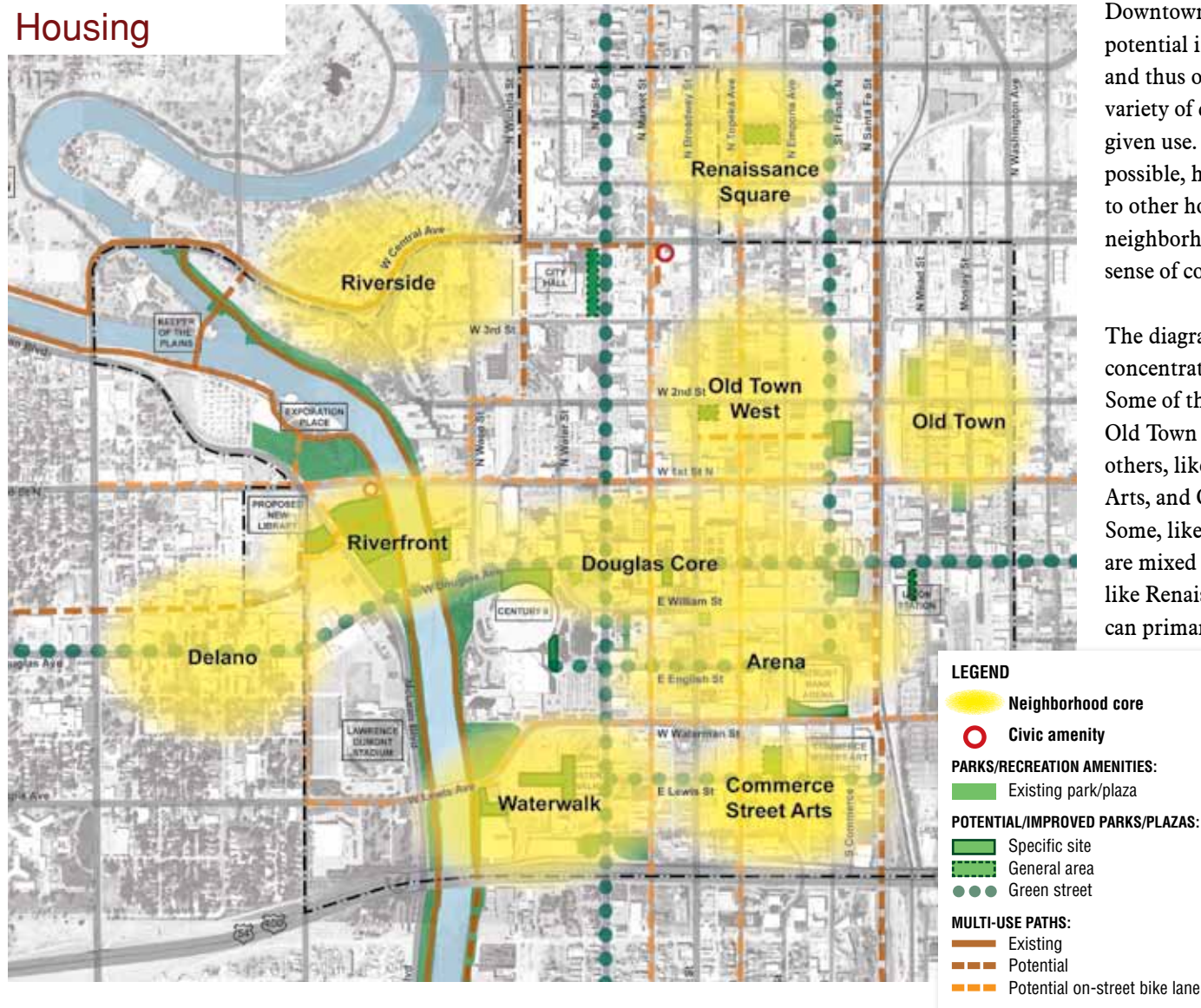
Downtown’s market-based development potential in terms of building floor area, and thus offers the greatest amount and variety of development opportunity of any given use. At the same time, whenever possible, housing should be located close to other housing to form identifiable neighborhoods. This will strengthen both sense of community and marketability.

The diagram identifies priority areas for concentrating housing in neighborhoods. Some of these neighborhoods, like Delano, Old Town and Riverside, already exist; others, like WaterWalk, Commerce Street Arts, and Old Town West, are emerging. Some, like Old Town and Douglas Core, are mixed with many other uses; others, like Renaissance Square and Riverside, can primarily be residential in character.

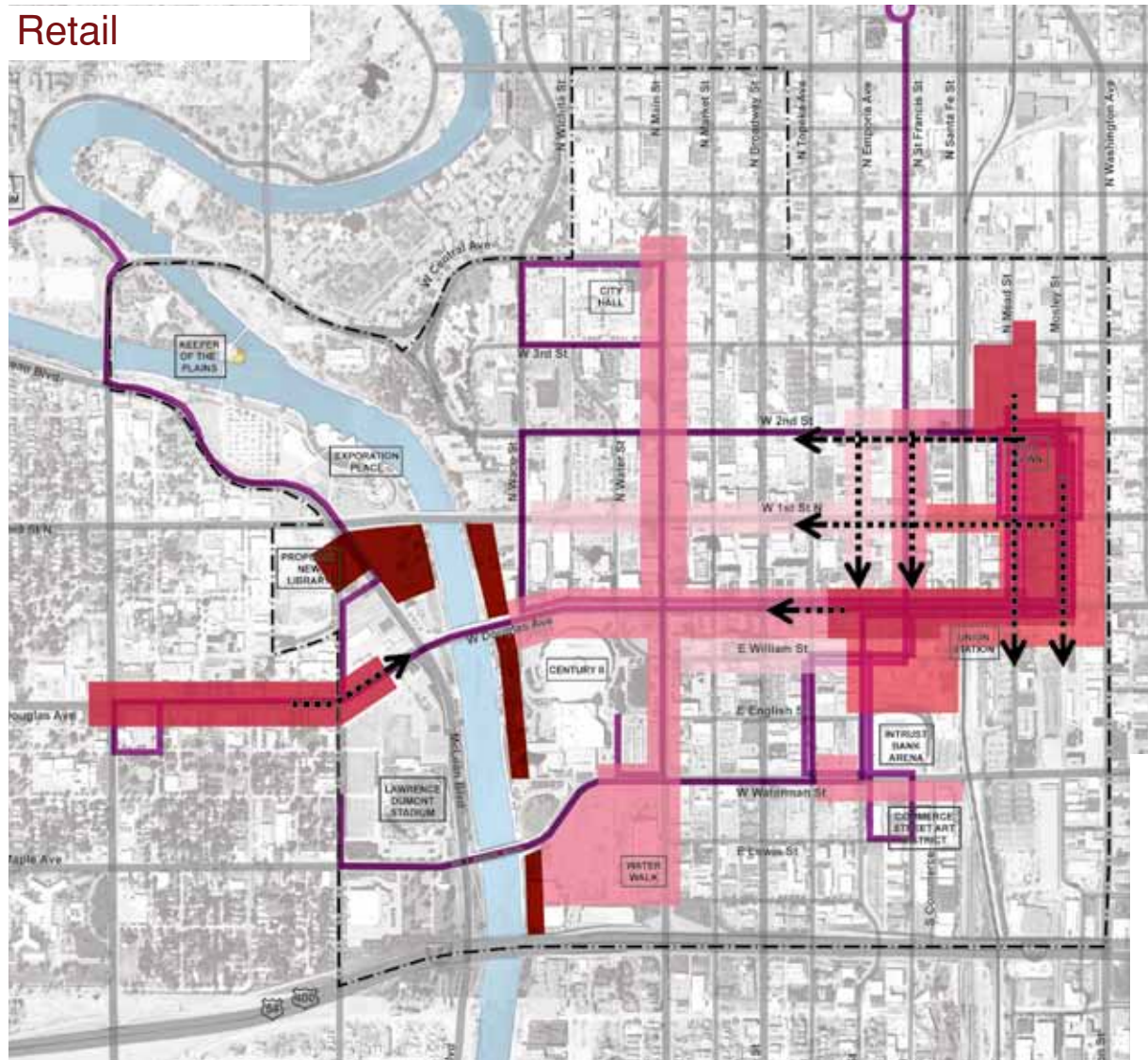
The “Framework: Green Public Spaces” section below identifies recommended park and street improvements that can further reinforce these neighborhoods.

Retail—Of all uses, retail is perhaps most sensitive to location because it is so dependent on convenient access and must compete

Housing



Retail



daily with other choices available to patrons. Downtown retailers almost universally prefer being close to other

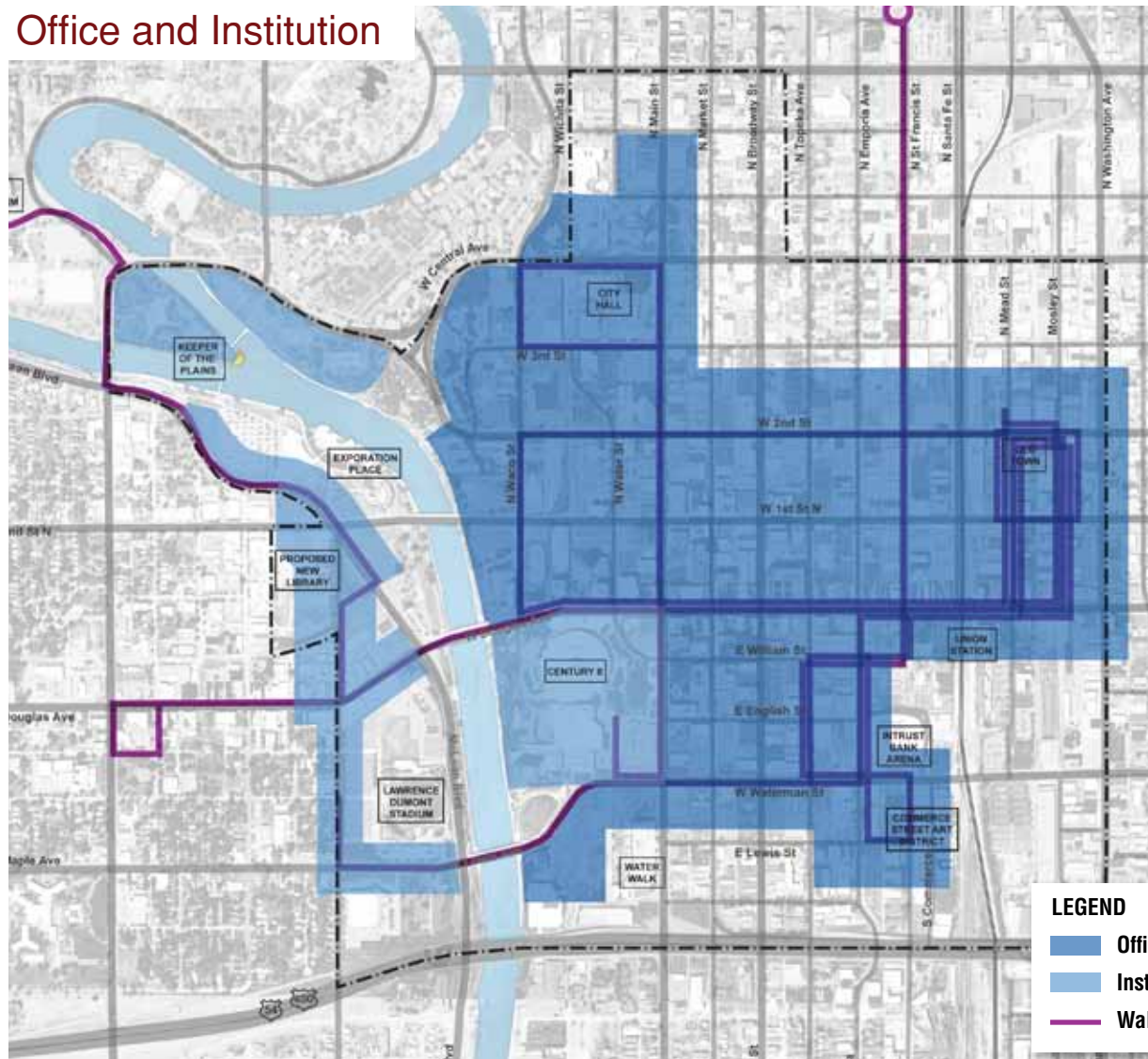
retailers, so concentrating retail in walkable locations is critical to success. Concentrations of successful retail are also among the most important amenities desired by housing, office or hotel developers, and tenants or home owners. The adjacent diagram focuses retail in close correspondence to the walkable development focus areas (and transit corridors, also shown). The diagram distinguishes first-, second- and third-priority locations for encouraging retail, as retail should generally be cultivated on a block-by-block basis. Riverfront locations are identified separately, as they are more feasible for destination restaurants located singly or in small clusters, owing to the unique quality of their setting.

Office and Institution—Office development and new institutional buildings are appropriate in most

LEGEND

- Existing retail concentration
- First-priority expansion area
- Second-priority expansion area
- Third-priority expansion area
- Priority riverfront location
- Walking/transit focus corridor
- Key growth direction

Office and Institution



LEGEND

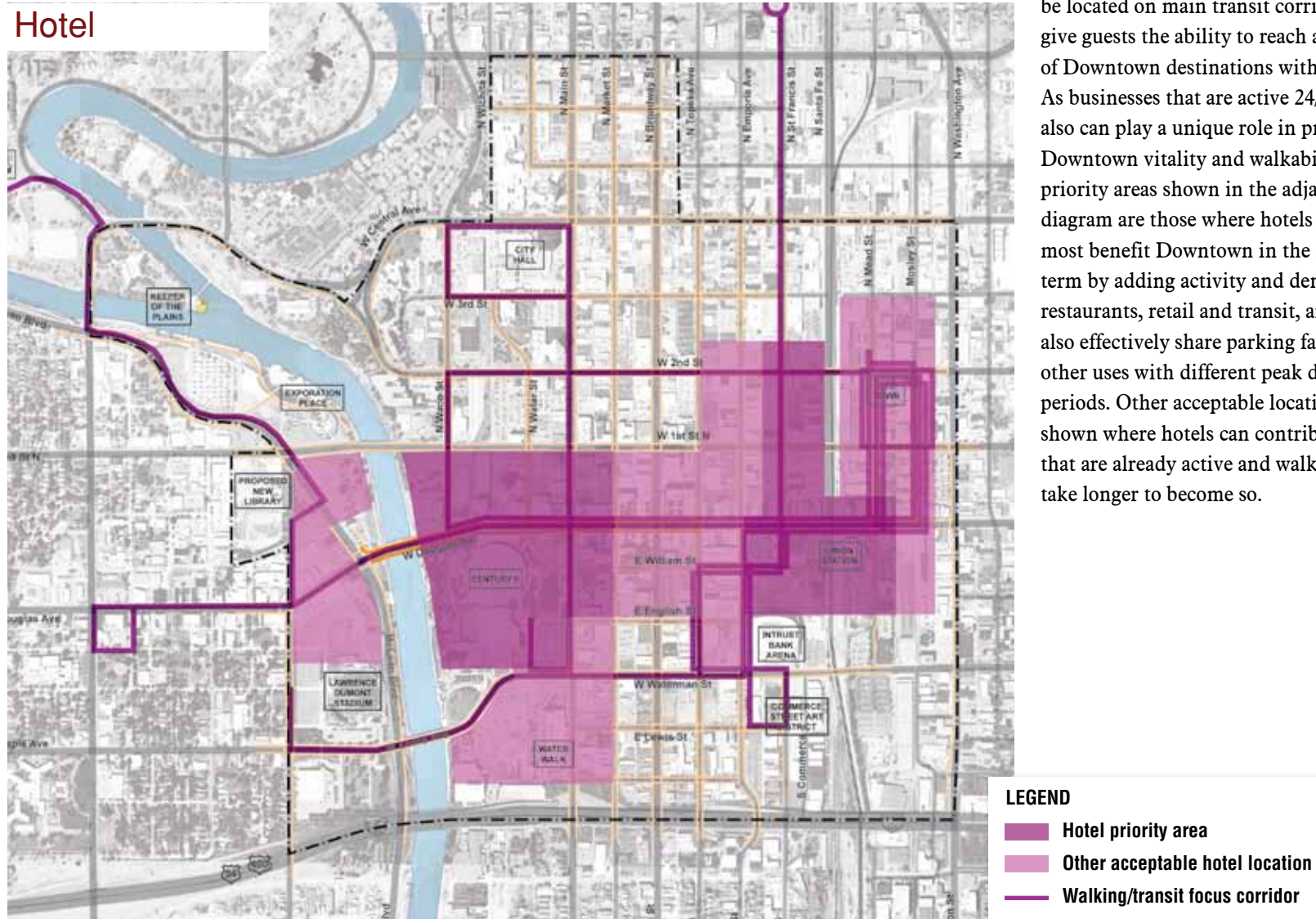
- Office/institutional priority area
- Institutional priority area
- Walking/transit focus corridor

Hotel—Hotel development should be focused in areas with visitor destinations—

of Downtown but should be concentrated along main transit corridors to both take advantage of and help create concentrated ridership for expanded transit services. This concentration also takes advantage of shared parking locations (existing and proposed) to help make most cost-effective use of parking infrastructure. It further focuses office space in Downtown's strongest areas of walkability and mixed-use activity—important amenities that both attract additional office space and are themselves strengthened by its presence. Some priority near-term sites for new Class A office development, based on marketable location and catalytic potential, include the southwest corner of First and Water; the southwest corner of Waterman and Main; and blocks along St. Francis in Old Town West. Securing new tenants for Union Station and the Kress Building as Class B office space would also yield strong positive impacts in highly visible locations. Institutional-priority areas indicate portions of the Arkansas River corridor where additional civic institutions are desirable to reinforce existing concentration of those uses.

principally, near Century II as a convention destination, and Old Town as a dining destination. Hotels should also

be located on main transit corridors to give guests the ability to reach a variety of Downtown destinations without a car. As businesses that are active 24/7, hotels also can play a unique role in promoting Downtown vitality and walkability. Hotel priority areas shown in the adjacent diagram are those where hotels could most benefit Downtown in the near term by adding activity and demand for restaurants, retail and transit, and could also effectively share parking facilities with other uses with different peak demand periods. Other acceptable locations are also shown where hotels can contribute to areas that are already active and walkable or may take longer to become so.



Green Public Spaces

Improved parks, plazas and green streets Downtown can significantly enhance Wichita's social, economic and environmental sustainability alike. Investments in this green infrastructure will invite community gathering and recreation, attract development, make Downtown a comfortable place to walk and bike, and help keep Arkansas River water clean.

Parks and plazas build community by inviting a variety of people to gather, formally and informally. They also directly enhance the value of new development as marketable amenities. Parks are generally characterized by predominance of landscaping, while plazas generally have significant areas of paving more suitable to heavy pedestrian traffic, complemented by trees and plantings. The diagram on the next page identifies existing parks that can continue to play valuable roles in their current condition; existing parks that deserve significant improvements; and potential new parks intended to enhance an emerging neighborhood. To make the most of Downtown's parks and plazas, public and private stakeholders should observe several basic principles:

- **Consciously program any public park or plaza with a variety of active and passive recreational activities that are supported by its design and context.** While a particular set of activities may distinguish a particular park, all Downtown parks and plazas should, as a group, accommodate a broad variety of activities. These should include, but not necessarily be limited to:

- > walking—including movement in wheelchairs and child strollers
- > sitting—individually and in group conversation
- > enjoyment of views to landmarks
- > enjoyment of decorative gardens
- > playgrounds/tot lots serving children of various ages from toddlers to teens
- > activities appealing to seniors
- > occasional special events such as farmer's markets and seasonal festivals
- > other activities identified by community members

- **Make parks and plazas readily accessible by sidewalk, transit, bike and automobile via area street and path networks.** Create views and introduce signage to emphasize the presence of such public spaces on surrounding streets, a measure that will also add value to nearby private development.
- **Design the landscape to enhance and take advantage of existing built and natural features.** Where possible, take advantage of the opportunity to create dignified park or plaza settings around views or distinguished buildings. Add plantings that shape space and support intended uses; avoid invasive species.
- **Locate open spaces, buildings and trees to create a mix of microclimates that are welcoming to people under various weather and seasonal conditions** throughout the year. Keep in mind that Wichita is windier than Chicago.

- **Design water fountains in one or more parks or plazas** to attract children of all ages, building on precedent at Old Town Square and WaterWalk.

Green streets can function as parks and plazas as well by creating inviting places to walk or sit along sidewalk areas. They also play important roles as prime addresses for existing and new property development. In addition, many cities are creating an environmental role for streets by designing them to filter and control stormwater runoff and reduce its negative impacts on nearby rivers and streams. This approach incorporates decorative plantings along the curb. All these roles, plus the capacity to accommodate multiple transportation options, characterize the “complete streets” that best serve Downtowns. The 2010 *Wichita Downtown Streetscape Guidelines* offer helpful and specific guidance on integrating plantings into streets.

Multi-use paths accommodate walking, jogging, biking and similar activities. Downtown already enjoys the benefit of multi-use paths flanking the Arkansas River that extend for miles and link to many other neighborhoods. There are important additional opportunities to add a path on the former railroad right-of-way in Delano—as was done between Central Avenue and Midtown—and along Santa Fe Street flanking Downtown’s active railroad corridor. The latter path could also have an extension west across the former Coleman factory site to Broadway, breaking down the scale of the long blocks between First and Second streets and opening access to new investments in arts facilities and housing

The diagram on the facing page shows on-street bike lanes as integral extensions of the multi-use path network. See the “Transportation Framework” section for more detail.

Recreation facilities are important local and regional destinations that often reinforce activity along the paths and streets that link to them. Downtown has several significant opportunities for new or improved recreation facilities.

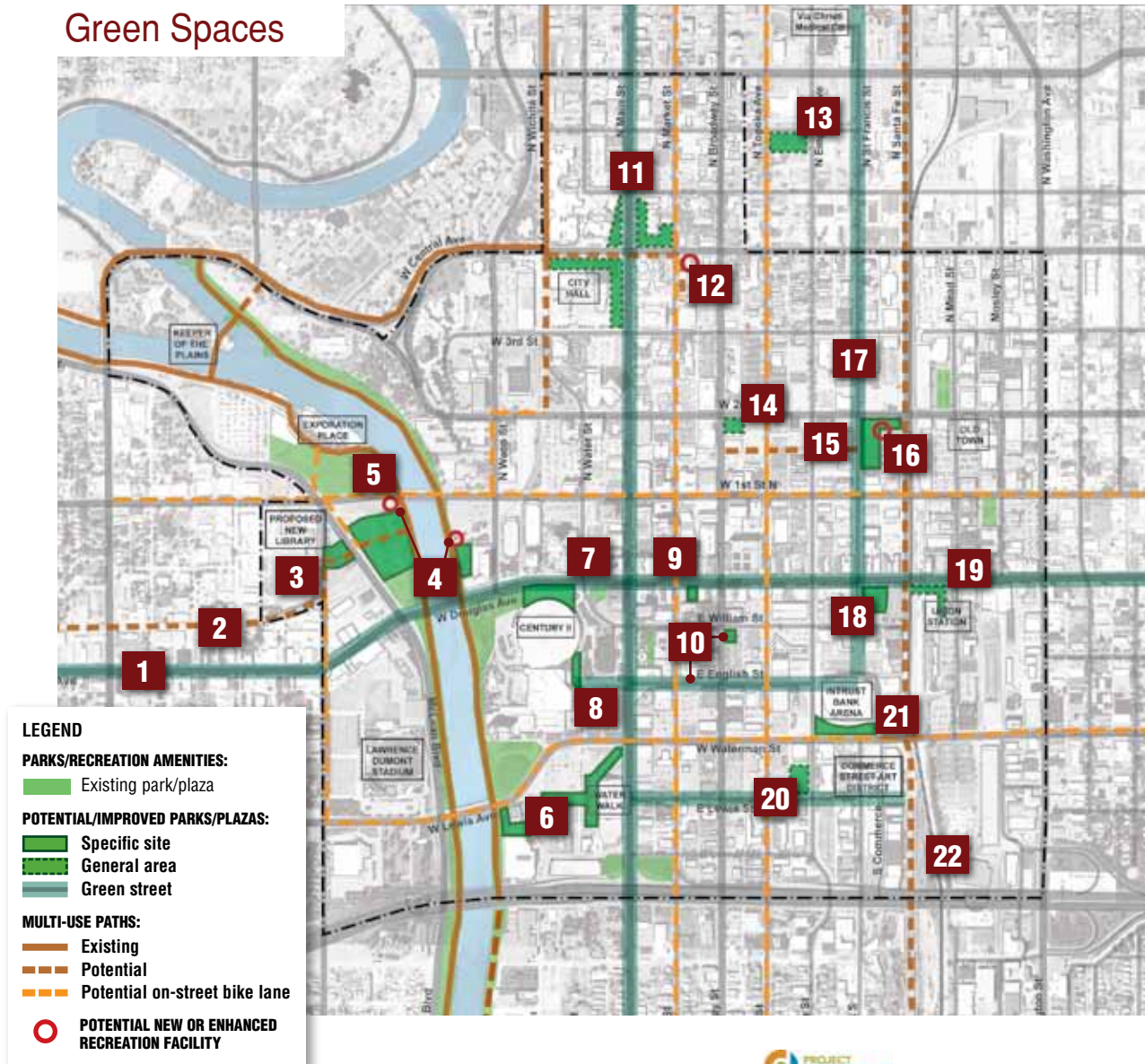
These numbered notes correspond to the reference numbers on the diagram of Green Spaces Framework diagram at right.

1. **Enhance Douglas** as Wichita’s premier street by adding street trees, where missing, and decorative plantings in tree lawns and planters.
2. **Convert the railroad right-of-way** into multi-use path linking Delano and the river multi-use paths and Downtown’s on-street bike network.
3. **Create Library Plaza** and enhance existing riverfront park areas as part of the new Central Library project. *See the recommendations for catalyst site C1.*
4. **Create a new boating facility** to serve Wichita State University’s crew teams, rent boats for public use, and accommodate launching of private kayaks, canoes and other non-motor-powered craft. Create a bike-rental and/or -service facility to promote use of the riverfront paths. These facilities may be combined or distributed; City-owned sites on either side of the Arkansas below the First-Second Street Bridge would provide highly accessible, visible sites that promote private investment in compatible development. Current park improvements linking the Broadview Hotel to the river reinforce this area as a community park destination and desirable setting for new river-oriented development on adjacent sites. *See the recommendations for catalyst sites C1 and C2.*
5. **Continue ongoing riparian improvements** along the Arkansas River. These include removing hazardous and unsightly debris, and introducing low plantings that naturally control the nuisance geese population, filter stormwater, and reduce the labor and energy required for park maintenance. Continue the highly successful engagement of community members in these efforts.
6. **Continue to install planned park and fountain amenities** at WaterWalk.

7. **Restore Kennedy Plaza** as an inviting, prominent civic space by relocating Century II loading functions and attracting additional mixed-use development on surrounding sites. Transform

underutilized Finley Ross Park into a development site that brings more activity and reinvestment to Kennedy Plaza and the nearby river edge.

Green Spaces



8. As part of the recommended extension of Water Street to Waterman (see catalyst site C3), **create park or plaza space that takes advantage of underutilized open space at Century II** and the current Central Library building for more intensive activities. These could include outdoor receptions or other functions related to convention center and performing arts events.
9. Despite a significant investment in public art during renovation of the Finney Building, the plaza at the state office complex on Douglas remains underutilized. **Encourage redesign and reprogramming of the ground floors of one or more adjacent buildings**—especially the state offices—to engage the plaza directly with added access, visibility, and activity such as dining linking outdoor and indoor spaces. As the planned Exchange Place adds more than 200 dwelling units and stores across the street, update seating, plantings or other elements if necessary to serve this expanded Downtown residential population better.
10. **Create two green hearts for the Arena District.** Make English Street a Green Street that forms a desirable residential address and a pleasant stroll from Century II to the Arena. Create a neighborhood park or plaza on the City-owned site of the former Allis Hotel. *See recommendations for catalyst site C5.*
11. As part of further planning for City and County property in the Government Center district, seek opportunity to **make additional use of green spaces for passive and active recreation.** Use the planted setback around

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- City Hall to accommodate a multi-use path spur accessing the new Downtown YMCA.
12. A prominent new facility at Central and Market will expand the downtown importance of the YMCA—already a popular destination for Downtown workers and residents alike. Better facilities and a growing residential population Downtown will add to its role. **Improve access to the new Y with enhanced sidewalks, bike lanes, a multi-use path spur** connecting to the Arkansas River and Midtown multi-use paths, and expanded circulator transit. Make the facility’s recreational activities visible through the design of the building and its site.
13. **Create a new park to anchor the Renaissance Square neighborhood.** Be flexible about its location to accommodate the best opportunity for land acquisition. Encourage new development projects to contribute park space through public/private incentive criteria for projects (see “Framework: Business Plan for Downtown”). Avoid closing streets to create the park; maintain the existing street grid as an important framework for access and development.
14. **Encourage creation of a new park to serve western areas of Old Town West** and/or create a heart for a potential new performing arts district. Be flexible about its location to accommodate the best opportunity for land acquisition. Encourage new development projects to contribute park space through public/private incentive criteria for projects (see “Framework: Business Plan for Downtown”).
15. **Create a pedestrian walk to add a more convenient scale** to the long blocks between First and Second streets and to help create neighborhood gathering spaces that engage the Orpheum Theatre; the Scottish Rite Center; one or more potential new performing arts facilities; the former Coleman factory site; and new housing development or other uses in Old Town West.
16. **Create a neighborhood park for Old Town** on part of the former Coleman factory site, with an emphasis on vegetation, public art, and memorializing the site’s history. See the recommendations for catalyst site C7 for more detail. Consider including an adventure-themed recreation facility, such as the climbing wall pictured for catalyst site C7.
17. **Prioritize St. Francis as a Green Street** to address its lack of vegetation and support its emerging role as an important corridor for walkable development. Add trees and other plantings as part of the City’s planned reconstruction of the street.
18. Although Naftzger Park already has excellent facilities that accommodate everyday use and frequent special events such as weddings, consider **enhancements that respond to the growth of pedestrian traffic** around the park since the Arena’s opening, and to potential development projects on adjacent sites (see recommendations for catalyst site C8). For instance, removing at least some fencing around the park could improve access to and from potential hotel, office, housing and/or restaurant space on the parking lot to the east, via a pedestrian walk
19. **Consider using Union Station’s brick drive and/or other site area as a public plaza.** Activate the plaza with outdoor dining and/or other activities connected to uses in Union Station and the Rock Island Depot. Coordinate plaza improvements with Douglas Avenue streetscape improvements, including street trees and public art.
20. **Create one or more parks serving the growing Commerce Street Arts District.** Be flexible about park location to accommodate the best opportunity for land acquisition. Encourage new development projects to contribute park space through public/private incentive criteria for projects (see “Framework: Business Plan for Downtown”).
21. Consider ways to **make open space around the INTRUST Bank Arena useful as everyday park space** for Commerce Street Arts and Arena district residents, workers and visitors.
22. **Create a multi-use path along the active Downtown railroad corridor.** This path can provide a valuable connection between Commerce Street Arts District and Old Town along the east side of the Arena, as well as connect to Midtown, South Central and other neighborhoods. North of Waterman, utilize space between the Arena and the railroad embankment. Consider a City purchase of the rail yard south of Waterman to extend the path southward, to add Commerce Street Arts District parking and access improvements (see strategic parking site 9), and to serve as a district event/gathering space.

Transportation Plan

OVERVIEW

The Transportation Framework addresses key challenges facing Downtown Wichita:

- Dispersed activity centers within Downtown make it difficult to create synergy for redevelopment, fostering an auto-oriented culture.
- The pedestrian environment does not support transit use. Large blocks (typically more than 600 feet long north of Douglas Avenue) and super-blocks result in long walking distances. Buses travel on one-way streets, creating longer walks to get to a bus for the return trip. The dispersal of key destinations further increases walking distances.
- Gaps in development combined with an uninviting streetscape (including dark streets at night) discourage walking between destinations.
- A lack of bus shelters, benches, and other basic amenities expose transit riders to the elements.
- Transit visibility is very limited. The “flag stop” system requires riders to flag down a bus. Limited bus stop signage or other on-street facilities are present to indicate the presence of transit.
- The Q-Line serves primarily as a parking shuttle linking Old Town, INTRUST Bank Arena and Lawrence-Dumont Stadium. It operates infrequently and has no on-street presence (no signs, no customer information, etc.). Recognition of and support for the Q-Line, however, are strong among Wichita residents.
- A limited number of through streets—a situation created

by the physical constraints of the river and railroad and by the street network itself—makes Downtown difficult to navigate. Street-network issues include the mix of one-way and two-way streets (some switch directions within Downtown) and super-blocks that have closed streets, impeding through-traffic within Downtown. Signals are not consistently timed to facilitate smooth traffic movement, forcing vehicles in some directions to stop at each light.

Key strategies for addressing traffic challenges:

- Creating a more complete Q-Line circulator system within Downtown that creates a strong on-street transit presence, connecting major activity centers (employment, Old Town shopping and night life, new housing, cultural and arts venues) for residents and visitors.
- Implementing bicycle circulation improvements, such as bike lanes, bike racks, and similar measures.
- Improving the pedestrian environment and pedestrian safety.
- Street conversion to two-way traffic, rehabilitation, and reconstruction.
- Signal coordination and re-timing.
- Introduction of more shared public parking that serves multiple destinations and has good walking, transit, and biking connections to other parts of Downtown.

TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

High-quality circulator bus stops/stations that create a transit presence

The key to the expansion of Downtown transit service lies in establishing permanent routes with high-quality stops that provide a visible “Q-Line” branding to the current

Downtown circulator. A significant number of prominent, permanent bus shelters should be installed along the new Q-Line routes. The design of each shelter should convey the Q-Line brand and have electronic signage that provides information about routes, schedules, real-time next-bus arrival, and Downtown destinations.

Develop Douglas Avenue and Main Street corridors as “transit preference” streets

Douglas Avenue and Main Street should be the primary corridors for expanded Q-Line transit service in Downtown. To better accommodate transit service, Main Street should be converted from one-way to two-way between

Douglas and Murdock, complemented by pedestrian-oriented streetscaping amenities and enhanced pedestrian crossings. Douglas should also receive streetscaping amenities and pedestrian crossing improvements to improve walkable connections to and from transit stops. Synchronize signal timing to support efficient transit operations along both corridors.



Douglas Avenue’s traditional development pattern—based on a combination of convenient walking, transit and auto access—offers a model to return to.

A Bigger Role for the Q-Line



The plan recommends expanding the Q-Line to four routes in the near term (upper map) and six routes over the longer term (lower map). Increased days of service and hours of operation will help the system function more effectively to tie Downtown’s disparate destinations together while supporting new development and jobs.

Buses to provide circulators and link Downtown activity centers

Expand the Q-Line in the near future from one 30-minute circuit to four linear routes focused on Douglas Avenue and Main Street. Extend service days and hours for all four routes. Over the longer term, add two additional routes that also focus on Douglas and connect to Old Town.

- **Q-Line Route 1** should operate Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to midnight and focus its service on Douglas, serving all of Downtown, Old Town, and the Delano district with a 10-minute headway between trips.
- **Q-Line Route 2** should primarily serve as a park-and-ride service to support events at INTRUST Bank Arena, the Century II Performing Arts and Convention Center, and Old Town and should operate six days a week from 5 p.m. to midnight, with Sunday service on event days as necessary.
- **Q-Line Route 3** should serve the governmental and office districts of Downtown, with service to Old Town on a route that focuses on Main Street and Douglas. The line should operate weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- **Q-Line Route 4** should serve the Museums on the River district, with a connection to Q-Line Route 1 in the Delano district. The line should operate from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday.
- **Q-Line Route 5** would emphasize performing arts, hotel, dining and convention destinations; **Q6** would add the Commerce Street Arts District and Via Christi Hospital.

Conversion of one-way to two-way streets to facilitate multimodal Downtown travel

Several of Downtown's pedestrian-oriented streets should shift from one-way to two-way traffic to attract intra-Downtown

travel. The conversions should include St. Francis, William, and English. Additionally, Main Street should be converted to two-way traffic between Douglas Ave. and Murdock Street to facilitate more efficient bus routing. Also consider the opportunity to convert First and Second streets from their a one-way couplet to two-way traffic on each. This would make Downtown navigation more convenient for drivers and cyclists, help keep traffic speeds moderate, and make the projected Q5 route easier to use by consolidating it on one street. Because the one-way couplet extends east through other neighborhoods, conversion to two-way traffic would require further study of the conversion's feasibility in those neighborhoods or creation of a new crossover point between one- and two-way traffic.

Traffic-signal synchronization

Improve signal timing throughout Downtown, coordinated with the street-type definitions shown on the Street Hierarchy diagrams (next page). Time signals to allow consistent traffic movement wherever possible at moderate, pedestrian-friendly speeds at or below 25 mph. Coordinate traffic-management efforts to optimize flow at critical blocks and intersections.



Addition of bike facilities

Dedicated bicycle lanes should be constructed on both an east-west corridor (the First-Second couplet) and a north-south corridor (the Market-Topeka Ave. couplet) through Downtown. Install “share the road” bicycle markings and signage on Waterman.

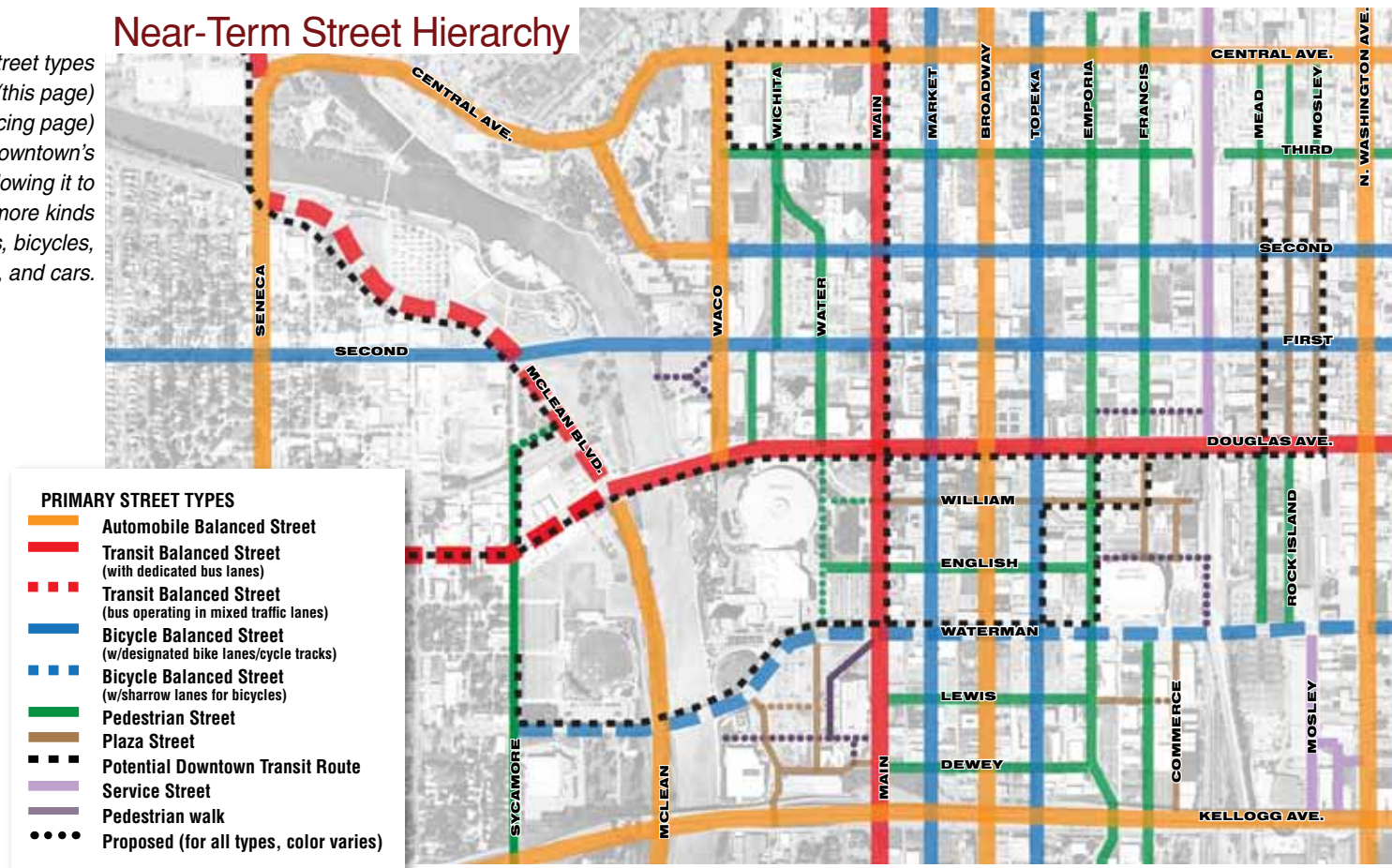
Addition of pedestrian safety and comfort features

Implement the *Downtown Wichita Streetscape Design Guidelines* on each of the street-improvement projects to install pedestrian safety and comfort features needed to improve the Downtown walking, bicycle, and transit environments. These improvements are needed to establish a walkable Downtown environment, a key to improving Downtown livability and

unlocking Downtown's redevelopment potential. Tailor pedestrian safety and comfort features to the primary transportation mode of the street and the predominant adjacent land use, as outlined in the *Implementation Model of the Streetscape Design Guidelines*. These features include improved sidewalks, street trees, lighting, benches, bicycle racks, trash receptacles, and bus shelters. Pedestrian crossings

A strategic mix of street types over the near term (this page) and long term (facing page) will help rebalance Downtown's street network, allowing it to better accommodate more kinds of traffic—pedestrians, bicycles, transit, and cars.

Near-Term Street Hierarchy



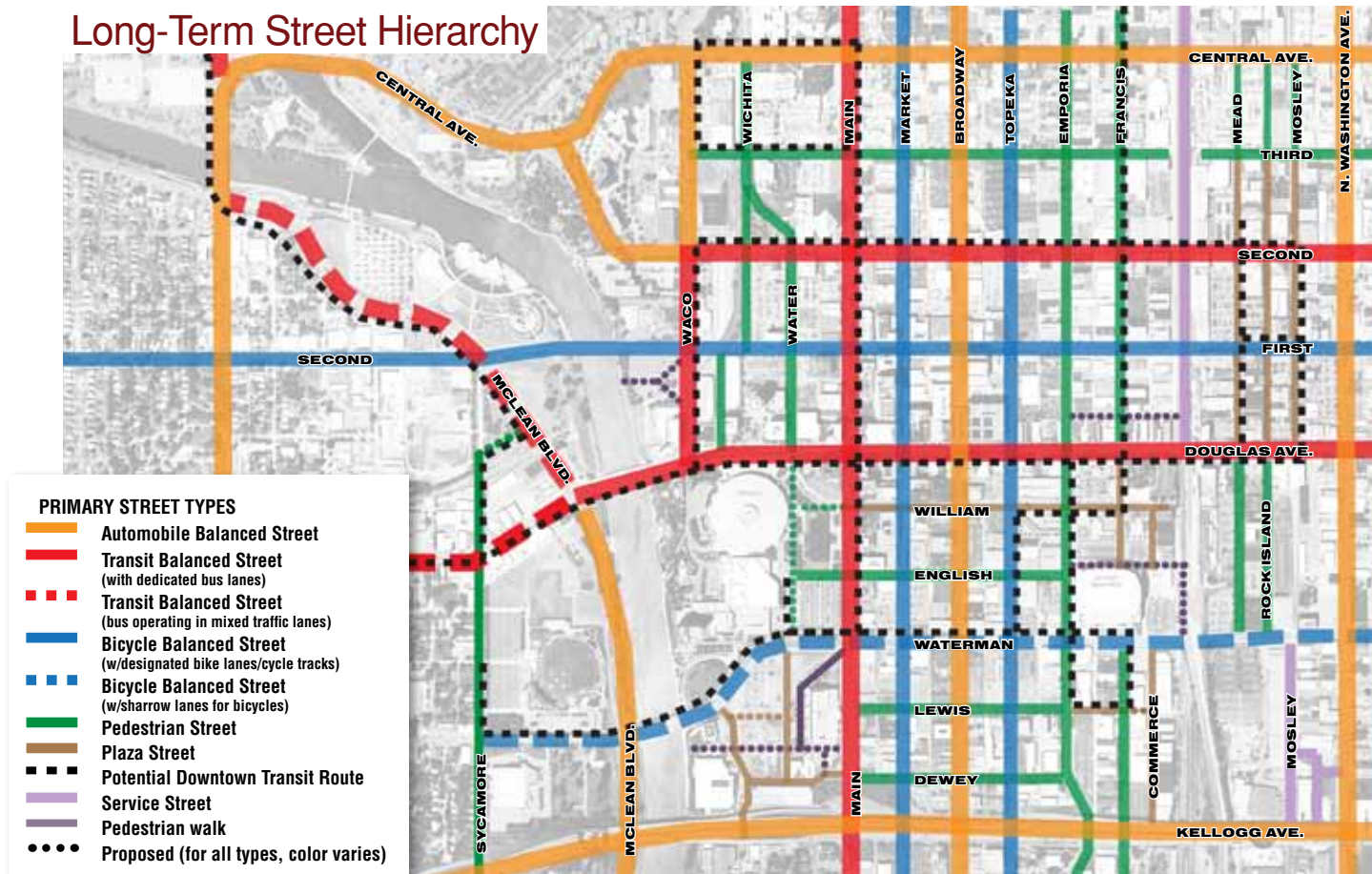
should use curb extensions, signage, and other traffic-calming measures and should be installed approximately every 1/8th mile along all street corridors.

Green Streets built into street design

“Best management practices” alternative stormwater-handling techniques should be included as pilot projects with street improvements where they are determined to be most feasible

and where results can be measured to assess the best approach to broader future application. Such practices typically utilize planted areas to help clean and retain stormwater and allow it to infiltrate into the ground, reducing peak impacts on storm sewers, the Arkansas River, and its tributaries.

Long-Term Street Hierarchy



Connecting to Existing Infrastructure

Reuse wide streets with low volumes.

Currently, Downtown streets provide two or three travel lanes in a single direction, which can easily support 20,000-30,000 vehicular trips per day. Actual traffic volumes, however, do not exceed 15,000 trips per day on any segment, and most daily volumes are less than 10,000. Even with increased traffic from projected redevelopment, enough right-of-way width exists for streets to expand lanes to accommodate transit and bicycle service and to improve the pedestrian environment with wider sidewalks and crossing upgrades. The near- and longer-term street hierarchy diagrams at left indicate how design of different streets should be refined to be more effective at accommodating certain transportation modes, such as transit or cycling. Street types correspond to those identified in the 2010 *Downtown Wichita Streetscape Design Guidelines*.



Optimize connections to freeways, bridges, river, and trail system.

Downtown streets primarily align in a grid pattern that links Downtown to the region with many alternative routes. Freeways, rail lines, and the river have limited crossings points, so the streets that cross these barriers have been identified to support automobile, transit, and bicycle traffic



with primary routes for each mode being designated. The remainder of Downtown streets—which support intra-Downtown traffic rather than through-traffic—have been designated to support pedestrian travel and vehicle parking alongside their more modest vehicular traffic.

Coordinating Downtown and Regional Transportation Needs

A list of Web links to each of the plans discussed in this section appears on page 5.20.

Implementing the Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035

The Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) 2035 for the Wichita Area MPO (WAMPO) serves as the blueprint for all regionally significant transportation projects and activities through 2035. It is a 25-year strategic plan for maintaining and improving mobility within and through the region. It provides a framework for creating a multimodal transportation system for the region that is safe, efficient,

accessible, and affordable. Improvements proposed for Downtown under the MTP will significantly enlarge transportation choices in the core area of the region by expanding access to transit, bicycle, and pedestrian travel. Additionally, the improvements focus on improving safety, especially in the pedestrian environment—which is most in need of improvement Downtown—as well as on increasing the Downtown’s accessibility to the region by providing for multiple modes of travel for intra-Downtown trips. Improving access to transit and for bicycles and pedestrians will make more affordable and environmentally sustainable transportation options available Downtown.

Implement Visioneering Wichita

Visioneering Wichita is a plan and associated community movement intended to create a future for greater Wichita,



with specific goals and strategies that address regional growth and development, retaining young people, job growth, income growth, education, family stability, Downtown development, arts, recreation, racial diversity, opportunity and harmony, and leadership. Visioneering Wichita envisions transforming

Downtown, the Museum District, Delano and surrounding commercial and residential neighborhoods to a regional destination for residents, businesses, and visitors. The proposed Downtown transportation improvements are essential to unlocking this vision.

Implement Wichita Travels:

Transit Vision for Greater Wichita

The *Wichita Travels: Transit Vision* lays out a vision for the development of transit services in Wichita that stresses easy-to-use routes, connections to other communities, and bus rapid transit (BRT) on Douglas Avenue. These proposed transportation improvements could make this future vision concrete by providing easy-to-use transit routes in Downtown and paying careful attention to a population that currently does not use transit. Easy-to-use routes would help these users become more accustomed to using transit services. As regional transit system improvements outlined in the vision—which advocates changing from a hub-and-spoke system to a more grid-like system—take hold, increased transit ridership should occur throughout the region.

Additionally, the proposed improvements could provide a permanent and very recognizable transit presence along Douglas in Downtown, facilitating future implementation of bus rapid transit service along this corridor.

Implement the Regional Pathway System Plan

The *Regional Pathway System Plan* describes a backbone system that connects existing and future bicycle/pedestrian facilities throughout the WAMPO planning area. This plan is a cooperative effort and includes extensive participation by various stakeholders, including WAMPO, federal, state, and transit agency representatives.

The plan provides an assessment of existing bicycle/pedestrian facilities and identifies, prioritizes, and recommends future connecting links for use by cyclists and pedestrians. Proposed dedicated on-street bicycle lanes, “share the road” signage and

Web Links to Key Regional Planning Initiatives

| SUPPORTING PLANNING DOCUMENTS | |
|--|--|
| Metropolitan Transportation Plan 2035 | www.wampoks.org/Publications/Metropolitan+Transportation+Plan+2035.htm |
| Visioneering Wichita | www.visioneeringwichita.com/downloads/Vision_document_May_2009.pdf |
| Wichita Travels: Transit Vision for the Greater Wichita Area | www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Transit/Wichita+Regional+Transit+Plan.htm |
| Regional Pathway System Plan | www.wampoks.org/IconMenu/Pathways.htm |
| Downtown Wichita Streetscape Design Guidelines | www.wichita.gov/NR/rdonlyres/37A8A9B2-D9F0-4850-A999-D89BFD0F5079/62195/WichitaStreetscapeDesignGuidelinesWebVersionlinked.pdf |
| Douglas Design District Streetscape Improvement Plan | www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Planning/AP/Comprehensive/DouglasDesignDistrictPlan.htm |
| The Master Plan for Wichita's City Center | www.wichita.gov/CityOffices/Planning/AP/NR/Downtown/DwntwnMstrPlan.htm |

markings, and pedestrian improvements in Downtown would connect with the existing pathway system along both the Arkansas River and I-135 corridors.

Implement the Downtown Wichita Streetscape Design Guidelines

The *Downtown Wichita Streetscape Design Guidelines* serve one basic purpose—to help improve the sense of place in Downtown. The cornerstone of the *Streetscape Design Guidelines* is an innovative implementation model that integrates context-based design into Downtown streets. Until now, the Downtown streetscape has largely been designed on a project-by-project basis, with few consistent design features. These guidelines provide a set of cohesive design principles for future street improvements. As a result, future projects could enhance the beauty of Downtown while improving Downtown mobility for all users of the street network. These guidelines should guide the design of all of the streetscaping improvements included in the Transportation Framework.

STRATEGIC PUBLIC PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE

The concentrated development pattern that best takes advantage of Downtown's use mix and walkable setting demands efficient use of land devoted to parking. This means a need for multilevel parking structures on most central blocks, with surface parking a possibility on some more peripheral blocks. Unfortunately, paying for parking structures presents a challenge. Analysis of development economics for new and rehabilitated buildings Downtown determined that it is difficult or impossible for many market-based development projects to pay for the cost of the structured parking they need. In addition, many older office buildings suffer high vacancy rates because they lack their own parking supply or one adjacent to their block, a key requirement for most new office or residential use.

Shared public parking structures offer a proven and cost-effective solution to these challenges. Different Downtown uses with different demand patterns can use the same spaces at different times of the day—for instance, a space might serve a resident or hotel guest at night but serve an office worker or retail shopper by day. This makes efficient use of the significant land and financial investment needed to provide parking. It also works well with the mix of uses—including housing and commercial—recommended throughout Downtown to help keep it active every day of the week. Wichita's investment in two parking structures in Old Town demonstrates this approach. Parking spaces in these structures have supported significant amounts of new

mixed-use development. Business user fees for spaces and property tax revenues (through a tax-increment financing mechanism) pay for the parking investment over time, and in time will more than cover its cost. The INTRUST Bank Arena parking strategy similarly makes use of shared parking spaces, most of them surface spaces. The City contracts with private parking-lot owners to use spaces for evening events at the arena after they are vacated by daytime commercial users. This has enabled thousands of people to enjoy events at the arena with little public investment needed for new parking infrastructure.

To maintain consistency with this plan's recommendation that public investment in parking extend only to spaces offered for public use—not spaces dedicated to individual private users—the Downtown parking and development program assumes that developers of ownership housing (condominiums) provide parking facilities for the units they develop, while public parking supports rental housing, office, retail, hotel and other uses. The housing market in places like Downtown Wichita typically favors a dedicated parking space (or spaces) for each condominium, but can tolerate rental units that rely on shared public facilities. If uses that share parking eventually require a dedicated supply (an example might involve conversion of rental housing to condominiums), shared public spaces may be converted to dedicated parking if the developer funds replacement public spaces elsewhere.

Good management is key to successful shared-parking strategies like these. The City's 2009 *Downtown Parking and Mobility Management Plan* provides the right guidance for this management. The City should utilize this plan to

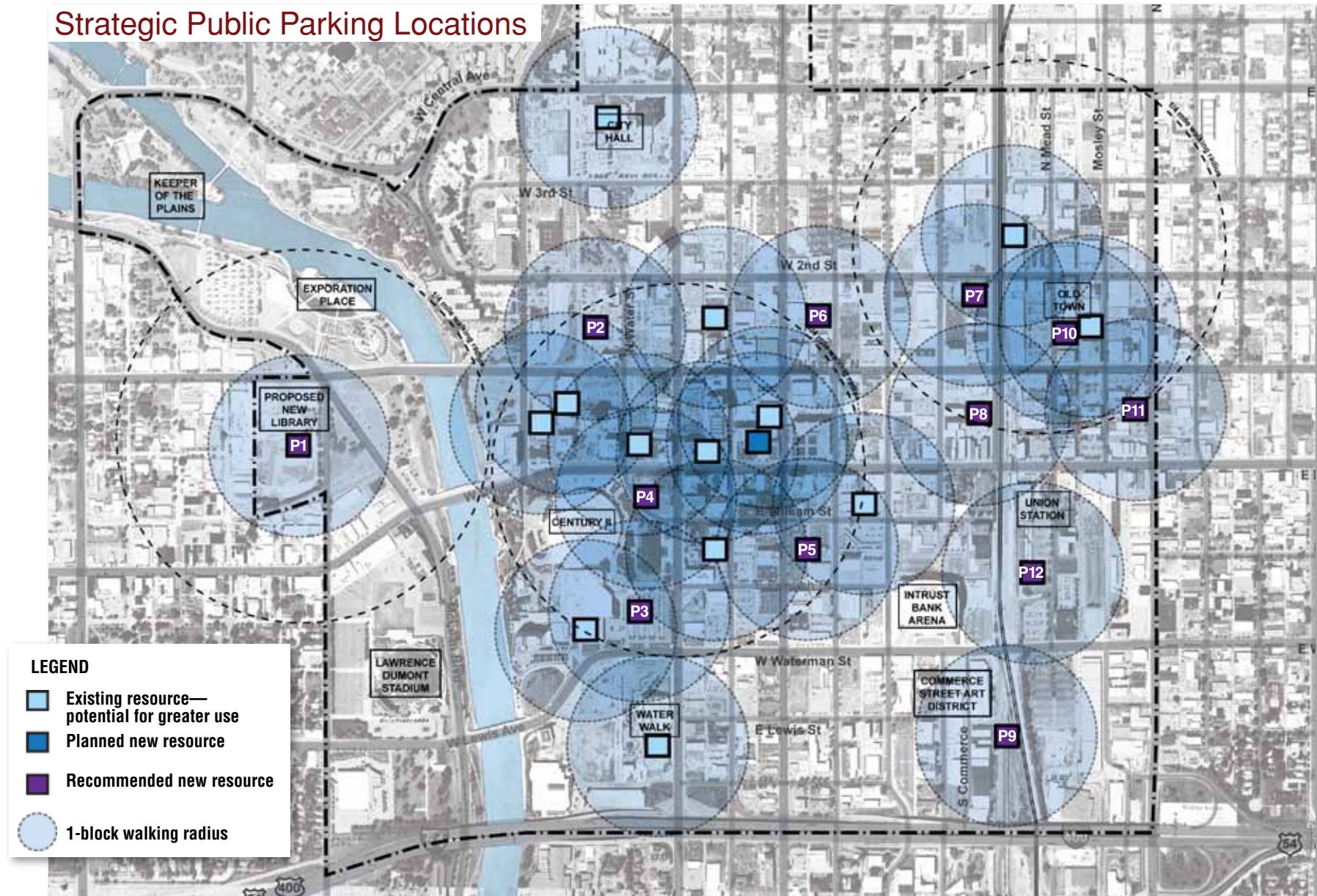
gradually expand its scope of Downtown parking management to include additional public and private locations. This will support new development projects on an ongoing basis.

As higher-density mixed-use development proceeds Downtown, each project will require additional parking for its contained uses as well as to replace any surface parking that may have existed on the site prior to redevelopment. This plan suggests 12 tentative strategic locations to consider for new public parking that would support new development. The strategic locations are tentative in that the parking generally need not be built until specific privately-sponsored development activities that could use it are announced. At that time, public investment can create the new shared parking facilities as the private development occurs. Most suggested sites would contain parking structures, although several sites are appropriate for surface parking over the near and/or long term. Not all of the suggested parking locations would be needed to accommodate anticipated development over the next 10 to 15 years. Locations should be chosen where site acquisition is most feasible and private development is most intensive. On-street parking, walkability improvements, enhanced transit, added biking facilities, and transportation-demand management should be employed in parallel to minimize the quantity of new public parking spaces needed.

Each of the 12 strategic parking locations shown on the map is described in more detail on the next few pages. Important considerations include each site's potential parking capacity, the anticipated mix of uses that would rely on the parking,

and design. A complementary use mix is especially important to maximize the opportunity for shared use of spaces and to encourage Downtown activity on weekdays, at night, and on weekends. Some locations are very specific, given the presence of existing publicly-owned land that could be used for parking facilities. Others are more general, to offer flexibility in selection and acquisition of privately-owned site(s) for a facility. The City should move quickly to develop concept plans, a program, and financing mechanisms for each site so that private developers can be made aware of the intent to provide parking.

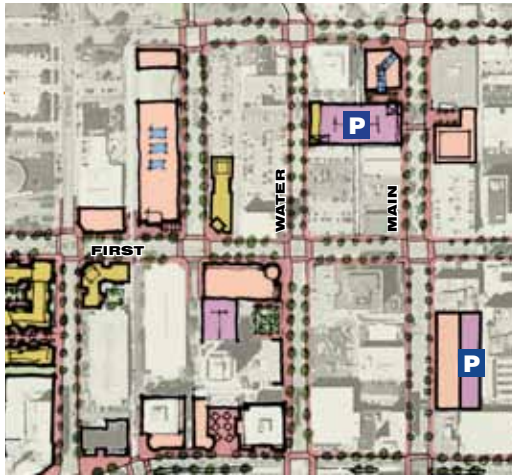
Strategic Public Parking Locations





P1: Delano River Edge

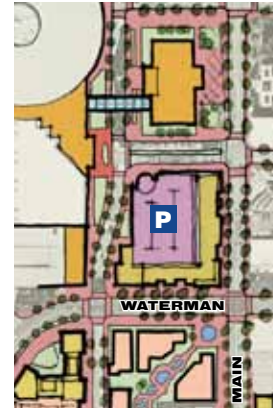
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| SUGGESTED LOCATION | Planned new library site; new on-street parking on McLean Boulevard at non-peak travel times |
| CAPACITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300-450 surface spaces on library site • Up to 100 on-street spaces |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports library parking needs, with convenient access to/from all city neighborhoods. • Uses capacity beyond that needed by the library to provide public parking for access to riverfront park areas, events and potential retail or restaurants. • Introduces parking in curbside lanes of McLean between First and Douglas at off-peak travel times to expand convenient public parking access to the library and river edge, and to help moderate traffic speeds. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library functions as planned and programmed • As capacity allows, additional public parking for uses, including park and plaza use, boating, biking, new restaurant(s) |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Construct Library and its parking prior to other new development to determine typical library use patterns and potential capacity to serve other uses. Ensure convenient vehicular access from all major directions. Accommodate significant bike parking to take advantage of access from nearby multi-use paths and on-street bike lanes. |



P2: Core/Water Street Area*

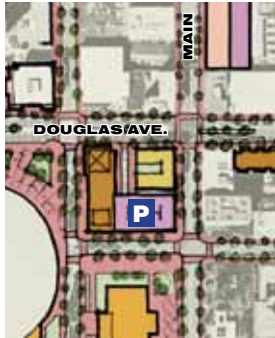
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| SUGGESTED LOCATION | Location may vary according to best opportunity (no specific publicly owned site available). Plan suggests potential sites on Main north and south of First. |
| CAPACITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 350-600 spaces in structure on block bounded by First/Water/Second/Main 300-500 spaces in structure on east side of Main between First and Douglas, in one or two bays |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds mixed-use development capacity in this important central area, accommodating parking displaced from redeveloped parking lots. Enables uses like housing that can add activity and cost-effectively share parking resources outside of typical business hours. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | 450 spaces could serve 100,000sf office/retail and 100-150 housing units |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Minimize parking-structure visibility along streets, especially Main, First and Second. Include ground-floor retail or other active uses, especially along Main, First and Second. For site south of First, consider limiting parking to one bay (reached via bridges to existing INTRUST Bank garage) to enable development of commercial or residential space along Main Street frontage. |

*roughly bounded by Wichita/Second/Market/Douglas



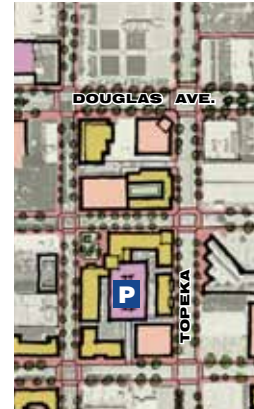
P3: Century II

| | |
|--|--|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | New parking structure on existing publicly-owned Century II parking lot at Waterman and Main |
| CAPACITY | 450-750 spaces in structure |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables expansion of Century II's convention, arts and/or hotel facilities. Supports additional uses on surrounding blocks to the extent capacity is available. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convention center expansion 200 spaces could accommodate about 250 hotel rooms 200 spaces could accommodate about 60,000sf office or retail |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Lining parking structure with housing or other occupied building space along Main and Waterman is strongly recommended to make these inviting, safe walking streets. |



P4: Water/Douglas/Main/William Block

| | |
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| SUGGESTED LOCATION | City-owned parking lot and additional area created by reconfiguration of William and Water streets into a T intersection |
| CAPACITY | 300-450 spaces in structure |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables re-use of the Century Building by providing convenient adjacent parking. Enables significant new commercial hotel or office development on the block. Supplements Century II parking capacity. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 275 spaces could accommodate 250 new hotel rooms. 100 spaces could accommodate 90 housing units in the Century Building. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Minimize parking-structure visibility along streets. Incorporate ground-floor retail or other active use along Main and Water as priorities, and along William as possible. Concept assumes architectural integration of the parking structure into the adjacent hotel building. |



P5: Arena

| | |
|--|--|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | City-owned Allis Hotel site at English/Broadway/William/Topeka. Alternatively, include parking on the Broadway/Douglas/Topeka/William block. |
| CAPACITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300-450 spaces in structure on former Allis Hotel site Approximately 200 spaces could serve existing state office building needs and Arena events |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables re-use of the Douglas and/or Henry's buildings by providing convenient parking. Continues to accommodate existing state office building parking on the Allis site. Enables additional new mixed-use development in the Arena district. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 more spaces could accommodate 160–200 more housing units (116 rehab units assumed in Douglas Building) as well as 50,000sf office or retail. Continues to offer parking for Arena events. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Locating structured parking at the center of the block, straddling the alley, is strongly encouraged, so the structure can be wrapped with housing or other uses that contribute to street walkability. |



P6: Core/Topeka Street Area*

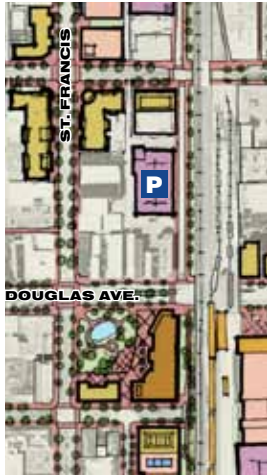
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| SUGGESTED LOCATION | Surface lot on Broadway/Second/Topeka/First block, suggested due to proximity to Orpheum Theatre and Scottish Rite. |
| CAPACITY | 300-450 spaces in structure |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add mixed-use development capacity in this important central area, accommodating parking displaced from redeveloped parking lots. • Enable uses like housing that can add activity and cost-effectively share parking resources outside of typical business hours. • Add convenient parking for performances at the Orpheum, Scottish Rite and potential new venues. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | 400 spaces could accommodate 250 housing units, 60,000sf office/retail, and performing arts events. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Wrap parking structure with housing along streets to maximize walkability. Designing the structure to straddle the midblock alley would help minimize its frontage on streets. |

*roughly bounded by Market/Second/Emporia/First



P7: Old Town West

| | |
|--|--|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | County-owned Coleman factory site (acquired with specific goal of providing parking and park space) |
| CAPACITY | Near-term surface parking: 200-300 spaces |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable mixed-use redevelopment on numerous vacant lots on surrounding blocks • Supplement existing Old Town parking capacity to enable more mixed-use development there. • Provides parking to support Arena events. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term structured parking: 400-700 spaces • 400 spaces could serve a mix of 250 housing units and 60,000sf or more office/retail space as well as Arena events. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Locate parking toward railroad side of site to maximize space for parks and potential building development along Second and St. Francis streets. Build near-term surface parking economically to enable longer-term replacement with structured parking. Enhance appearance of longer-term structured parking with architectural façade, trees and other vegetation. |



P8: Douglas/Historic Corridor*

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| SUGGESTED LOCATION | Surface parking and other vacant sites on St. Francis/First/Santa Fe/Douglas block suggested (not publicly owned) |
| CAPACITY | 100-150 surface spaces or 250-400 structured spaces |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | Enables additional mixed-use development around Naftzger Park and along St. Francis. Could provide valet and self-park capacity for a new hotel adjacent to the park. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | 250 spaces could accommodate a mix of 150 hotel rooms and 50,000sf office or retail space |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Locate parking toward Santa Fe street to minimize its direct visibility from St. Francis. Provide clear wayfinding to and from parking, designed to accommodate both pedestrians and vehicles. |

* roughly bounded by William/Emporia/First/Santa Fe



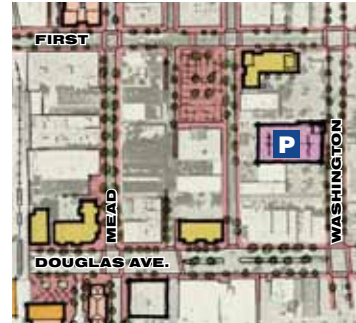
P9: Commerce Street Arts District

| | |
|--|---|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | Surface parking on portions of railyard site east of Commerce Street (consider City purchase of site) |
| CAPACITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 200-350 surface spaces |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables more intensive use and infill development on Commerce at St. Francis Streets. • Supplements Arena parking capacity. • Adds service access to south and east. • Accommodates a new recreational path. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | 150 spaces could accommodate a mix of 100 housing units and 25,000sf of office, light industrial or retail space. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Provide lighting for nighttime safety, trees for daytime shade. Provide convenient walking connections to Commerce and Waterman. Reserve space for a recreational path parallel to railroad embankment. Design space to accommodate periodic arts-oriented outdoor events. |



P10: Old Town/Mead

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|--|--|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | City public parking lot between Mead and Rock Island Streets |
| CAPACITY | 225-400 spaces in structure |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expands mixed-use infill development capacity in Old Town and Old Town South. Accommodates existing public spaces in Douglas/Mead and Douglas/Mosley lots to allow infill development. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Could replace some or all of roughly 225 spaces in the Airbus parking lot to enable higher-value redevelopment there. 250 spaces could support a mix of approximately 100-150 dwelling units and 50,000-75,000sf of office or retail or retail space. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Frontage along Mead should include ground-floor retail or other active pedestrian-oriented use. Coordinate access and management with existing public parking structure on the Rock Island/Mosley site. |



P11: Old Town/Washington

| | |
|--|---|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | Block bounded by Washington, Douglas, Mosley, First, within easy walking distance of Douglas and easily accessible by car from Washington. |
| CAPACITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 300-500 spaces in structure |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enables mixed-use redevelopment on numerous vacant lots on surrounding blocks Supplements existing Old Town parking capacity to enable more mixed-use development there |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120 spaces replacing existing spaces at Douglas lots. 100–120 net new spaces accommodates housing and/or office and retail developed on Douglas/Mead and Douglas/Mosley lots. 150+ spaces supporting 40,000-50,000sf of retail and/or office space. |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | If parking structure directly abuts Mosley or Washington, frontage should not exceed 120' (two parking bays) and should include ground-floor retail or another active pedestrian-oriented use. |



P12: Union Station

| | |
|--|---|
| SUGGESTED LOCATION | South of existing Union Station building, preferably adjacent to rail embankment to leave room for additional development along South Mead. May include existing surface parking at ground and/or rail embankment levels, shared with Union Station uses, in the near term and/or to supplement an eventual parking structure . |
| CAPACITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 450-750 spaces in structure |
| HOW IT SUPPORTS THE MASTER PLAN | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands re-use capacity of existing Union Station and adjacent historic buildings. • Increases mixed-use development capacity on the Union Station site, in Old Town South, and in Old Town. • Supplements parking for the Arena and Commerce Street Arts District. |
| SCENARIO FOR SUPPORTED USES <i>(assumes some sharing of parking spaces among uses with different peak schedules)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 100 additional existing surface spaces possible over short and long terms • 60,000sf of rehab and 85,000sf of new office and/or retail space • 150 new hotel rooms |
| DESIGN, SITING AND/OR TIMING CONSIDERATIONS | Locate parking to allow additional new development along South Mead. Ensure convenient, well-lit walking access to the parking from Douglas to make it useful to development along Douglas. Convenient, well-lit walking access from Waterman is also desirable so that parking can serve Arena events and the Commerce Street Arts district. |

Business Plan

Downtowns across the country are demonstrating their power as engines of economic growth and quality of life. Downtown Wichita is poised to build on its demonstrated performance as such an engine. However, development in Downtown often poses initial development costs that can be hard to address with mechanisms like special assessment districts that have funded suburban infrastructure. This can be a challenge to developers. Some of the principal cost barriers preventing developers from investing in Downtown Wichita in recent years have resulted from:

- difficulty providing convenient parking, due to lack of space on the development site and/or the high cost of building space-efficient structured parking
- old buildings in need of repair and adaptive re-use
- poor site configuration and complex construction issues
- poor soil conditions, brownfields
- frequent lack of direct comparables sought by potential lenders; many projects are not “commodity-type” investments
- land-acquisition and land-lease issues

Experience in other downtowns across the U.S. shows there is an important role for the City to play in helping overcome such obstacles to private investment, thus unlocking opportunity for compelling economic returns. Successful projects in other downtowns reveal these consistent themes:

- **A combination of public and private investment is typical in initial revitalization efforts.** In many cases, property owners and developers can’t by themselves invest in their property to tap its optimum market value.

- **A clear plan supported with consensus on priorities is very important.** A downtown master plan allows developers to invest in a predictable context and gives the city clear standards and objectives by which to measure development quality.
- **It is rarely a single incentive that makes a project work; typically, a bundle of incentives is necessary.** See the Development Finance Toolbox section below.
- **Public/private cooperation and commitment are necessary.** The public and private sector each have unique roles to play.

The City now has the opportunity to refine its set of Downtown development incentives so they can be as effective as its suburban ones. The results can be significant: on a per-square-foot basis, Downtown properties in the Self-Supporting Municipal Improvement District—Downtown’s traditional business district—contribute to Wichita’s tax base at five times the rate of average properties elsewhere in the city, due to Downtown’s inherent benefits to property value. The potential real estate value of the next ten years’ worth of market-based development—on the order of \$500 million—is more than four times the cost of key public infrastructure investments that this plan recommends as development incentives, such as public parking structures and parks. The following policy recommendations will enable the City to treat decisions on why, when, where, and how it invests in Downtown as business decisions. The recommendations offer guidance and objective measures for targeting public

investment to earn strong returns isn't the form of new private investment and community benefits.

A Prudent Public Investment Policy Designed to Unlock Private Investment

These policy guidelines can maximize Wichita's return on public investment—using public funds sparingly to remove the obstacles to private-sector investment in high-value development.

Inviting Initiative

The business plan guides prudent public investment to invite entrepreneurial initiatives by a variety of people.

- A **Downtown Development Go-To Center** will provide developers and property owners information on market opportunity, financing sources, project approval criteria, potential partnerships and other topics to encourage successful projects.
- Households and businesses seeking locations in easy walking distance of stores and parks will have a **choice of compelling addresses** offering varied building formats, neighborhood characters, and costs.
- The **Downtown Visitors Amenity Plan** will make it easy for visitors to get to know all downtown Wichita has to offer.
- **"Complete Streets"** that are walkable and green will offer more property owners opportunity to capture the enhanced value of walkable development.
- A **targeted retail recruitment** program will help match businesses and property owners in the most advantageous locations.
- **Communicating what downtown has to offer** will make it a more attractive option for young professionals and other workforce from the region and elsewhere.
- **Investing in public parking structures** will significantly expand the economic potential of existing properties that lack parking and options for locating new development.
- **Setting clear criteria for developers and projects** that seek public financial assistance will enable developers to move more efficiently and successfully from concept to ribbon-cutting.

1. **Target investments to support market-driven development interest.** Chapter 2, A New Era of Opportunity, details the significant market-driven development opportunities in Downtown Wichita.
2. **Make the most of existing public investment.** "Connect the dots" Downtown by targeting walkable development along corridors like Douglas Avenue that link existing destinations. Encourage development in areas near the arena and Old Town where investment in public entertainment destinations, parking, parks and brownfields remediation has stimulated private investment and will continue to do so.
3. **"Build it as they come," not "Build it and hope they will come."** Pace incremental public-sector investments to related private-sector development. While some modest initial investments will be needed to "set the table" for development—such as updating zoning regulations and conducting detailed plans for specific Downtown places like the convention center and the Commerce Street Arts District—more significant investments in infrastructure like public parking should only happen in conjunction with actual private development projects as they move forward. Transit improvements can similarly be made in a series of steps—improving stops, providing more service information, extending service hours, adding routes—rather than requiring large one-time investments. See action strategies 5 and 6 for more detail.
4. **Only make public investments that bring lasting public benefits like parks or public parking—not for privately-used parking.** Do not pay for privately-used parking or other things the public can't directly use.
5. **Target investments to enable many people to benefit and invest further.** See the sidebar for ways the master plan opens the door to individual actions.

6. **Bring clarity and predictability to the process of applying for and administering public incentives for Downtown development.** Establish clear eligibility criteria for developers—addressing experience, expertise

and financial capability—and for projects—addressing location, uses and design that encourage further private investment and overall vitality in Downtown. See below, and action strategy 8, for more detail.

EXHIBIT 5-2

Principal Development Finance Incentives and Their Most Appropriate Applications Downtown

All of these incentives are available through existing programs except the low-interest loan pools, which this plan recommends establishing.

| TOOL | SOURCE | APPLICATION |
|--|--|---|
| Historic preservation tax credits | State/federal | Adaptive reuse of historic buildings |
| Low-income housing tax credits | State/federal | Housing developments incorporating low- and mixed-income households |
| New Market Tax Credits | Federal | Developments that include a commercial component (office, hotel, retail, light industrial) |
| Brownfield Grants | State/federal | Developments on brownfields sites |
| Planning funds, such as Livable City Grants and Community Challenge Grants | Federal | Planning initiatives |
| Transportation funds such as TIGER II grants | Federal | Transportation infrastructure |
| STAR bonds | State | Developments with significant sales or guest-tax revenue (mainly hotel, retail) |
| Capital investment | Local (city and/or county) | Public infrastructure (streets, utilities, parks) |
| Tax increment financing | Local (city and/or county) | Financing public parking, parks or other public infrastructure serving a variety of developments |
| Community improvement district (CID) financing | Local (city and/or county) | Developments with significant sales or guest tax revenue (mainly hotel, retail) |
| Façade loans/grants | Local (city) | Improvements to facades of existing buildings; retail business storefronts |
| Land | Local (city and county) | Developments on catalyst sites or other publicly-owned land; land may be provided at below-market price if the development meets defined standards of program, design, community benefit etc. |
| Low-interest loan pools (for housing and possibly retail) | Local (consortium of lending institutions) | Housing developments; potentially retail |

Development Finance Incentive Toolbox

A variety of development-finance incentives have been established to supplement what commercial lenders offer. Exhibit 5-2 summarizes these tools. Many of these have been well-used in Wichita and elsewhere, and others are relatively new, but property owners and developers need better awareness of and access to the full range of incentive tools, as most projects end up utilizing several in combination. It's important to avoid focusing on any single tool as the primary one for a given project or for Downtown investment overall.

NEW CRITERIA FOR ADMINISTERING PUBLIC/PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Because there is clear market interest in Downtown development, the City can afford to decide which proposed projects do or do not merit public incentives based on what the project can offer back to the public and its likelihood of successful execution. This plan thus proposes two sets of criteria for judging projects seeking incentives: one for the developer, and one for the project. The developer criteria would involve a point system: developers earning points above a certain threshold would qualify for consideration, and those with still higher point ratings could qualify for more incentive funding based on a lower debt-coverage ratio. The project criteria would include two levels. The first would include basic standards any project must meet for initial consideration, such as being located in one of the walkable-development focus areas identified in this plan. A second, optional set of project benefits that respond to master plan goals (such as providing land for a public park or public parking in an area where it is desired) could earn a project bonus points that translate into increased incentive amounts or priority consideration over other projects.

Recommended Criteria for Developers

1. Appropriate experience of the developer and design team

Urban development projects, especially those including multiple uses, are inherently complex in their design, financing, and construction. Developers experienced in these complexities are much more likely to deliver successful projects. Developers or property owners who lack sufficient experience may compensate by partnering with developers who have such experience. For instance, a property owner with retail expertise who wants to create a building including retail and housing may wish to partner with an experienced housing developer. Like the developer, those involved in designing the project also need expertise in the complexities of urban development projects.

Criteria: *Minimum of 2-5 development projects completed by the developer and 2-5 development projects completed by the design team that fit one or more of these development types:*

- *Urban development*
- *Mixed-use development*
- *Public/private development*
- *Wichita/Kansas experience*

2. Financial Qualifications

A developer's financial qualifications are critical measures of the capacity and commitment to complete a project.

Criteria: *Minimum "good standing" on existing loans and minimum of 10-20 percent equity in project based on the following submissions:*

- *Financial statement of entity and/or principals*
- *Lender commitments on the project*
- *Existing loans and status*
- *Equity contribution to the project, definition of equity and sources of equity (with commitment letters)*
- *Lender testimonials on previous development projects (good standing)*

3. References of the Development Entity and/or Principals

Third-party references provide objective assessments of a developer's qualifications.

Criteria: *Minimum 4-5 positive letters from lenders and municipal partners in development projects*

4. Public Sector Leverage/Business Deal

Is the project's financial proforma realistic? Does third-party market analysis confirm the marketability of the proposed program of uses? Will the project return compelling benefits to the community in the form of tax revenue or other considerations? Does the project really depend on public/private incentives? If so, the developer should submit an analysis indicating the project would be infeasible "but for" public/private incentives.

Criteria: *Project program is in line with documented market opportunity; economic analysis demonstrates project's dependence on incentives; and analysis demonstrates positive community impacts, based on these submissions:*

- *Market Analysis—The developer should submit independent market analysis addressing the*

project's proposed program, or refer to relevant, up-to-date market analysis on file at the Downtown Development Go-To Center (see action strategy 7a), with attention to:

- > *product type*
- > *comparables and performance*
- > *projected rents/prices*
- > *projected absorption*
- > *economic analysis demonstrating need for gap financing*
- > *standard private investment returns*
- > *uses of public funding (must be public assets, not private)*
- *Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis—The Economic Impact Model criteria established by the Greater Wichita Economic Development Coalition (GWEDC) may be used to justify bonus points, such as for jobs creation, but it should not be used as the primary criterion for evaluating a project, as it does not address values such as a housing development's role in attracting target workforce or the benefits of clustering a critical mass of restaurants near each other.*

Recommended Criteria for Projects

1. Required elements, such as:

- Location in a walkable development focus area
- Land use(s) are in target locations defined by the master plan
- Promotes walkability:
 - > Significant amounts of ground-level window area promoting an interesting and safe walking

-
- environment, and fitting with traditional contexts of retail storefronts
- > Minimum height of two stories
 - > Provision of retail or other active uses at ground level where possible
 - > No addition of surface parking and no ground-level structured parking directly adjacent to sidewalks

2. Optional elements support master plan goals, justifying additional incentive amounts or priority, such as:

- Participation in retail master lease program
- Provision of land for public park or parking structure in a strategic location
- Creation of a strategic walking connection
- Provision of transit passes and/or participation in a transportation-demand management (TDM) program
- Provision of additional regional economic development benefits, such as those described in the GWEDC Economic Impact Model

More detailed project criteria specific to each Downtown district are provided in the appendix.